

America's future security and prosperity is directly tied to the investment we make in the education of our children. In an increasingly competitive world, it is impossible to expect that our workforce will remain a global leader unless we give our children the tools to succeed. I believe we must make a serious reinvestment in our educational system to allow each of our children the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. By doing so, we can ensure that America will remain the most prosperous, innovative, and dynamic country in the world.

Higher Education

More than ever, the ability to pursue a college education has a profound impact on an individual's future work opportunities, earnings potential, and quality of life. For too many in the Hudson Valley and throughout the nation, a college degree remains out of reach because of the skyrocketing cost of higher education. Many who are fortunate enough to attend an institution of higher education graduate only to be saddled with crushing student loan debt. In Congress, I am working to make sure that the potential to pursue a college education is available to every child in the Hudson Valley regardless of his or her economic background.

To achieve this goal, I support increasing the maximum Pell Grant award and making affordable financial aid more accessible. I was proud to cosponsor and vote for H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act, which will reduce the interest on federally subsidized student loans by 50%, saving the average borrower \$4,400 over the life of his or her loans. With one of my first votes, I voted for a continuing resolution that maintained government funding and increased funding Pell Grants by over \$615 million dollars. This increase would raise the maximum award to \$4,310 and help over 5 million students.

Kindergarten Through High School

Before our children can even begin to consider applying to college or embarking on a career, they need acquire a solid educational foundation from their early childhood through their high school graduation. For too long, funding shortfalls and government mandates under No Child Left Behind have placed an incredible burden on local taxpayers, created a system that forces educators to merely teach to the test, and short-changes our students. In 2006, the funding shortfall for No Child Left Behind short-changed the 19th District by almost \$8,000,000. To reverse this trend we need to raise teacher salaries to attract the best and brightest to instruct our children, and incentivize the study of math and science to ensure America's competitiveness in a global economy. During this Congress's effort to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act I will be fighting to eliminate the impact of No Child Left Behind's unfunded mandates on our taxpayers and our schools.

To start this effort, I was proud to vote for a continuing resolution that maintained government funding and increased funding to special education, Title I, and Head Start programs.